

***CAL-FED Bay-Delta Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, October 29, 1998
Sacramento California***

***Gary T. Arant
General Manager
Valley Center Municipal Water District
San Diego County***

Good morning, my name is Gary Arant, and I am the General Manager of the Valley Center Municipal Water District, located in north San Diego County. I want to thank you for the opportunity to address the Bay-Delta Advisory Committee today.

While this is our first appearance before your body, we have monitored and made input to the process since its inception. As CAL-FED moves ever closer to the critical juncture at the end of this year, we felt compelled to deliver our message in person.

Valley Center MWD is a member agency of the San Diego County Water Authority, and, in turn, a subagency of the Metropolitan Water District. In an average year, VCMWD delivers 32,500 to 35,000 AF of 100% imported water to 21,000 residents, and approximately 1,500 agricultural customers. These agricultural customers take 80 to 85% of our annual deliveries and turn this blend of State Water Project and Colorado River Aqueduct waters into citrus, avocados, ornamental flowers, nursery crops, poultry and livestock. In fact, according to the California Avocado Commission, Valley Center is the Avocado Capital of California.

It should be noted that this agricultural production is accomplished with water costing between \$475 and \$600 per acre foot, depending on the location in our delivery system.

Finally, our agency is a signatory to Urban Best Management Practices MOU as well as the Agricultural Efficient Water Management Practices MOU, and we are in the process of developing our Agricultural Water Management Plan.

Earlier this year, the Board of Directors of the Valley Center Municipal Water District submitted written comments for consideration in the Draft CAL-FED Programmatic EIS/EIR supporting Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative for the CAL-FED Bay-Delta solution.

Alternative 3, recognized by most as being the best overall solution in terms of ecosystem, water supply, water quality and water reliability, included all the common programs, as well as dual conveyance, and additional surface and groundwater storage.

In September of this year, CAL-FED released its "Phase 1" implementation plan. In this \$4.4 billion plan, the dual conveyance facility has been classified as a "contingency measure", construction of new surface storage is conditioned upon realizing increased water use efficiency, a water transfer framework, and conjunctive use programs, and the near term emphasis is on ecosystem restoration, water conservation (including retirement of farmland), and water recycling programs. Though planning and regulatory work for additional surface storage will be completed during Phase 1, there will be no actual commitment for construction.

It seems that the Phase 1 Implementation Plan has pleased no one.

● In the view of water interests, including my agency, by relegating the dual conveyance facility to a contingency measure, conditioning new surface storage on certain performance parameters, CAL-FED has clearly abandoned the best technical solution in favor of a political solution. Though moving consideration of the dual conveyance facility out into the future is somewhat acceptable, water interests feel that construction of new surface storage is critical to the overall solution, and should not be conditioned on realizing conservation, water transfer, and recycling programs which essentially all parties have already agreed to implement.

● Evidently, environmental interests, not satisfied with having made the dual conveyance a "contingent measure", feel that surface storage should also be relegated to the same category. In their view, consideration of surface storage should be deferred until all alternative solutions have been implemented and given adequate time (seven years) to demonstrate their effectiveness(or ineffectiveness)in matching California's water supplies and water demands.

In response to concerns with the Phase 1 recommendations, and the position staked out by the environmental community, I was asked by my Board of Directors to come here today to:

● ***-Reiterate their support for Alternative 3 as the most technically sound comprehensive solution for the environmental, water quality, water supply and water reliability concerns currently enveloping the Bay-Delta;***

-Express the concept that, while appropriate phasing of improvements and programs based on clear triggers is advisable, there must be a firm commitment at the outset that all recognized components will ultimately be realized and that there will be a full solution;

-Communicate that a commitment to a full solution providing enhancements to the environment, water supply quantity, quality and reliability will be critical to gaining public acceptance of the process and its associated costs; and finally,

-Point out that it is only with the public's acceptance and support that we, at the retail level, will be able to move forward and implement the more aggressive urban and agricultural water conservation programs and water reclamation projects which are critical for the overall success of the program.

Hopefully, you will take these points into consideration as you evaluate possible modification to the Phase 1 Plan, adoption of the Phase 2 Plan, and all future phases and aspects of the Cal-Fed process.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today on what is, without a doubt, one of the most critical issues of our age.

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